

**DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL**

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**CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL URGES SAFE, SOBER JULY FOURTH**

The Fourth of July holiday begins this evening and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) wants drivers to keep safety utmost in their minds, not only with fireworks but also as they plan for driving on the long weekend ahead. "This mid-summer holiday can bring a lot of fun and good times to families, but it can also become a senseless tragedy if you're involved in a traffic collision," CHP Commissioner Dwight Helmick said.

The CHP wants your holiday memories to be happy ones. You can help us assure a happy Fourth with a few simple precautions," the Commissioner said.

- If your Independence Day celebration includes drinking alcohol, arrange for a friend or family member to be the "Designated Driver" to get you home safely. Don't drink and drive.
- Always wear your safety belt, every time you drive. Make sure all your passengers are also buckled up, even on short trips.
- Plan ahead – especially if you will be driving long distances. Add extra time to your trip so you won't feel rushed and take a break every hour or two to refresh yourself.
- Try to avoid heavy traffic, but if you can't, be patient.
- Leave a two-to-three second buffer between you and the cars ahead. More space means greater safety.

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“Many Fourth of July activities include children,” said the Commissioner.

“California law requires any child who is either under four years of age *regardless of weight*, or under 40 pounds *regardless of age*, to ride in a properly installed child safety seat.”

“Parents and guardians must correctly mount a safety seat in their vehicle and verify their child is securely buckled into that seat. They should read their vehicle owner’s manual as well as the instructions which came with the seat. Both publications contain potentially life-saving information. Nothing is more tragic than the death or injury of an innocent, unprotected child – especially when it could have been prevented by a properly used child safety seat or safety belt.”

The special holiday enforcement period begins at 6:01 p.m. tonight, and continues through midnight on Monday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. During this period, the CHP will join forces with statewide traffic enforcement agencies from Nevada, Arizona, and Oregon. “During C.A.R.E. (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) holidays, we traditionally have every available enforcement vehicle and officer on the road,” Commissioner Helmick said. We’ll be looking for DUI, speed, and safety belt use.

“We want everyone to have a safe Fourth of July – buckle-up, slow down, and we’ll see you out there on the highway,” the Commissioner concluded.

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